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# THE General Assembly:

O R,

The Necessity of Receiving the Communion in our  
*Publick* Congregations, evinced from the Nature of the  
*Church*, the *Word* of God, and *Presbyterian* Principles.

I N A

# S E R M O N

Lately Preached

In the CATHEDRAL CHURCH  
of EXETER.

By Francis Fullwood. DD.

Luke 22. 19.

This do in remembrance of me.

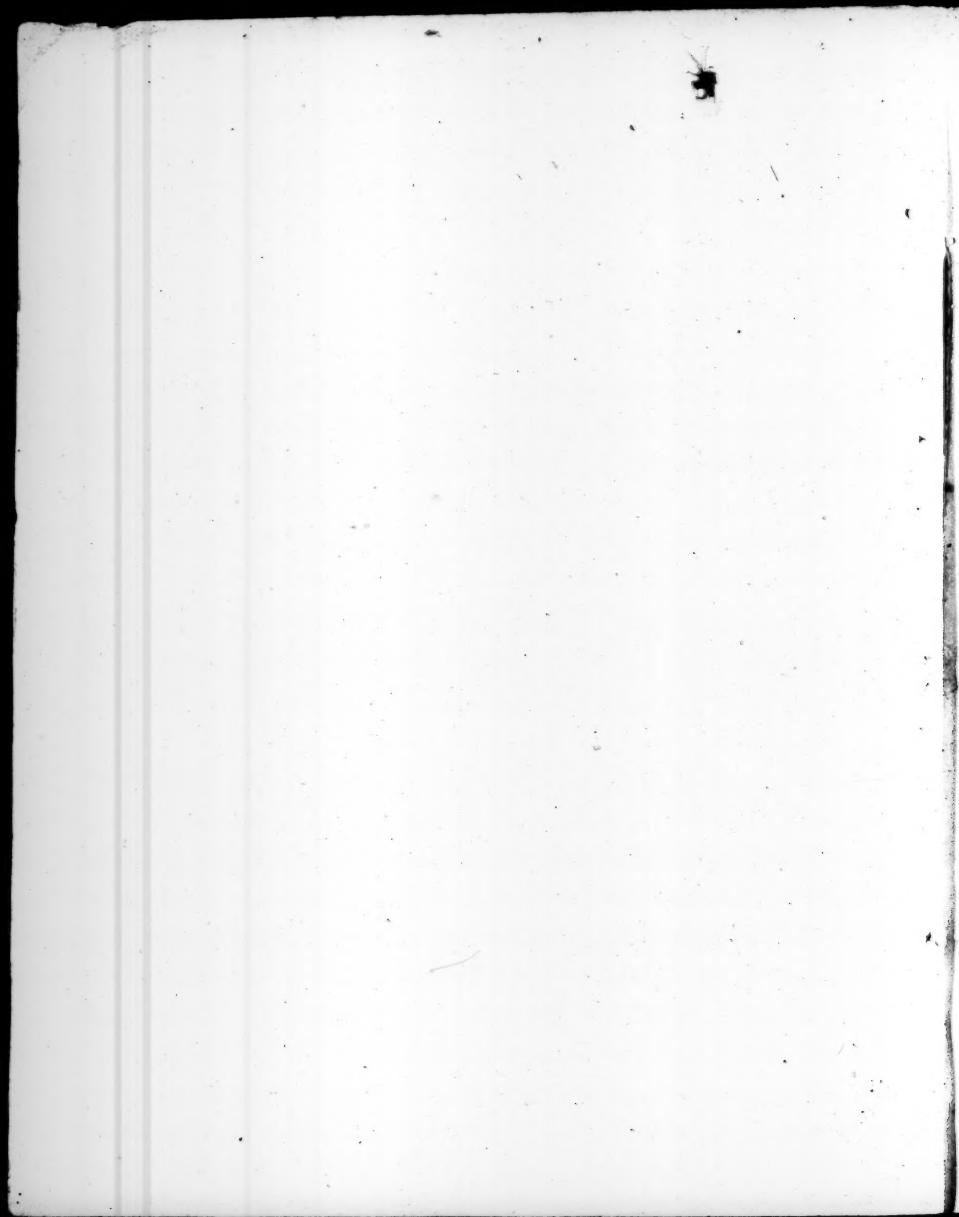
I Cor. 10. 17.

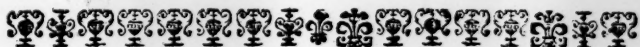
— One Bread and one Body.

Canon. decim. Apostolorum.

Omnes fideles, qui ingrediuntur Ecclesiam, & Scripturas colunt, non autem  
perseverant in ORATIONE, nec Sanctam COMMUNIONEM  
percipiunt, velut inquietudines Ecclesiae commovent, & Convenit Com-  
munionem privari.

London, Printed by E. Cotes, for James Collins, at the Kings  
Head in Westminster-Hall. 1667.





To my Worthy Brethren, the Ministers, that yet Consent not in point of Conformity.

**A**mongst the many strange and sad Distempers of this poor Church, I think there is none of more sad or strange observation, than the Prodigious neglect of the Lords Supper. After several Essayes, and other Methods, in my Place and Calling, used to redress it, at length these words burst out.

If they seem somewhat warm, I pray you, mistake not my zeal and charity which ought to be so) for spite or malice, or any evil passion; though indeed, to me, while I labour to be faithful, and to commend myself to every mans Conscience in the sight of God; It is a very small thing to be judged of you, or of mans Judgment.

Yea, let me be bold, and caution you also (my Brethren) that you who have stood it out so manfully heretofore against the Independent Separation, take heed of falling your selves, and of drawing your Friends, unawares with you, into the Gulf of Brownisme, by your private Meetings, and private Communions.

Let me, at length (if there be yet need) perswade you, to deal like Christians, and honest Men, if not like Ministers; and when your Friends desire your advice about Communicating with us, do not intimate your dissatisfaction, when you cannot speak it: or by solemn silence burden them in sin, and betray them to the Laws, when you may save them from both.

## The Epistle, &c.

*Let me conjure you, if there be any regard due to the King, to the State, to the Church, to the Laws; yea, to the Command and Ordinance of Jesus Christ, our Lord, both yours and ours, or to the souls of those you seem to love, or your own Credit, and Reputation, &c., as some of your Brethren, I hope, have done already: do also only, candidly, faithfully: and let your Friends, by your seasonable advice and good example, know, that it is not their concern to despise or disclaim Dignities, and Government, or any longer to neglect their known duties, but rather, speedily and honestly to endeavour, in their places, to reform, that which they complain of, and to do their duty, and receive the SACRAMENT.*

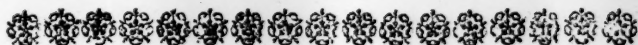
*It is not my business to accuse you, there is one that accuses you, even Moses; the Law without you and the Law within you: and that, I bear no malice in my heart against you, I have this Testimony, I am ready to receive the COMMUNION with you.*

Farewell,

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Heb.





HEBR. 12. 23.

To the General Assembly, and Church of the First-born which are written in heaven.

**T**His *Epistle*, you know, was written to the *Hebrews*, that is the Christian *Jews*; who were mix't in their *principles* as well as *name*: and though, *Christians*, were somewhat *Jewish*. They saw a necessity of the *Gospel*, and did *profess* it; but seem'd to retain a smack of the *Law*: not as yet *wholly* purged from the *Idol* of their *Tribe*, the leaven of the *Pharisees*, the old leaven of the *first dispensation*.

Besides, they had many *friends*, even the body of the *Jewish party* of the *other* persuasion; and some of these were become their *enemies* for *Christs* sake, and the *Gospel*, and persecuted them for their present Conformity: So that, considering the *persecutions* of their enemies, the *perswasions* of their friends, and the easie *Bias* of their own somewhat *legal* inclinations, we may believe they were in *no little danger*.

Hereupon, the *Insufions* of the *Gnosticks*, who pretended to *knowledge* and *prudence* above any others, the bold and private *whispers* of these *false teachers*, assault and charm them with all Advantages: they at first incline them to *much Caution*, then Stagger their *faith*, and now, they have prevailed with divers among them, to look back, yea to *draw back* and *forsake* the Christian *Assemblies*, that were then as *publique* as the times would bear.

Heb 10 ult.  
C. 10 v 35.

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*This was the occasion of this Medicinal Epistle: the scope whereof is consequently, to confirm and secure them in the Truth, the Necessity and the incomparable Excellency of the Gospel: especially against any Jewish pretensions to the Contrary: the last of these, viz. The excellency of the Gospel, you have in a most Elegant and splendid manner, by a very particular Collation of the Mosaical and Christian state, displayed in the Text and Context.*

First, He draws the shade and black estate of the Law; to which as *Christians*, they were not come. For ye are not come unto the mount that might not be touched and burned with fire, Nor unto blackness and darkness and Tempest, &c. vers. 18, 19, 20, 21.

Then he sets by it, that which exceeds in glory, the Gospel State, to which, as *Christians*, they were come, vers. 22, 23, 24. but ye are come to Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem: and to an innumerable Company of Angels. To the General Assembly and Church of the first born, and to God the Judge of all, and to the Spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, and to the blood of sprinkling which speaks better things than that of Abel.

That part of this Notable enumeration, that is, chosen out for our present discourse, seems to lie as the Corner-stone, on which all the rest, on both sides, lean and depend: yea, 'tis marvelous to observe, the weight and Emphasis, the Apostle here lays upon it, and by how many mighty and glorious words, he endeavours to commend this one and the same thing to us; for what can we possibly understand by Mount Sion, but the Christian Church? What by the City of the living God, but the same

2 Cor. 3.

1 Cor. 12, 23,  
24, 25.

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same Church? What by the *Heavenly Jerusalem*, but the same Church still? and lastly, what by the *General Assembly* in the Text, but as the Text it self explains it, the *Church of the first born*.

And indeed, it is the Apostles plain intention, by all this and much more, to instruct and perswade us, that our being come to this Church, as his Phrase is, is the Radical privilege of Christianity; and that all other Evangelical privileges, are but branches or fruits of this; the sum is, by our being come to the Church of Christ, we are come to the fellowship of the General Assembly of Saints on earth, and in heaven, of Myriads of Angels, of Jesus the Mediator, and God himself the Judge of all.

Such is the happiness of our Christian State; and I pray God, that none of us failing of the grace of God, by the springing up of any root of bitterness in us, should seem to come or fall short of it.

Verf. 15 c. 4. 1.

Now, you know, your Calling brethren: ye are come, that is, ye are, and stand admitted to, ye are and continue members of, ye profess and enjoy fellowship with, the Church of Christ described here, by its Nature, [ 'tis an Assembly ] by it's quantity, [ 'tis general, ] by it's dignity, [ 'tis the Church of the first-born ] and by it's security, [ 'tis written, or inrolled in heaven ] Ye are come — to the General Assembly, and Church of the first-born which is written or inrolled in heaven.

And hither we come, and shall proceed in Order: first considering the Church in the Nature of it, as it is an Assembly.

The word, *ἐκκλησία*, is supposed by some, to admit eleven different significations in Scripture; yet they

The Nature of the Church.

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they *all* consent in this one *General* expression of an Assembly: it therefore affords us the *common* and not the *special* or distinguishing *nature* of the Church.

Yet, though we might reckon many *more sorts* of Churches or *assemblies* differenc'd, by their Author, Subjects, qualities, ends, &c. Yet, I conceive they may be all reduced, as to our *present* discourse, to these three.

1. There is an *Assembly* that is *sinful*, called by the *Psalmist*, a *Congregation of evil doers*, the *Divels* Chappel, and the *Synagogue of Satan*. 2. There is an *Assembly Civil*, or a Church of *man*, gathered together for *Publick* and *Civil* occasions. 3. Lastly, there is a *Sacred* Church, a *Holy Convocation*, the *Church of God*; Such is the *Assembly* in the Text.

1. Here we may Note, 'tis an *Assembly*, not a *Rabble* a confused and turbulent meeting of *ungovern'd persons*, upon their own heads but an *Assembly*, that is a *Congregation*, that is also a *Convocation*; Warranted by a just and a *Regular Calling*. *Ecclesia* (saith *S. Augustine*) *ex vocatione appellata est*. It were easie to make it evident that *profain* Authours, as well as *Sacred* and *Ecclesiastical*, do place this call in the very definition of the Church; & *proprie* *Cætum aliquem à superiori aliquo Convocatium in finem politicum vel Ecclesiasticum denotat*. Yea the *Church* and the called are *Synonymous* terms, generally in *Scripture*.

Let *all Assemblies* look to their *Calling*; and if the *Magistrate* allows them not, let them be sure of the *word of God*, otherwise, we fear *who* will claim them.

2. It is an *Assembly*, that is *Habitually*, not always *Actually* so, much less altogether in one and the *same place*, the *root* of the *Hebrew*, indeed signifies *Congregare*, and the *Church*, well enough is termed a *Congregation*;

but

*Psalm. 26. 5.*

*Act. 19. 32.*

*1 Cor. 1. 1.*

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but we must necessarily understand it to be so in the *first act* only, not the *second*: 'Tis so in its *first constitution*, preparation, disposition, not alwayes in the *exercise* of *Actual* Fellowship and Communion. Indeed, the *Nature* of the Church is rather a *SOCIETY* or a *COMMUNITY* than a *Communion*: 'Tis a Community in order to *Actual* Communion, but *Actual* Communion is rather the *formal Action* than the true *Nature* of the Church: for if it were not so there would be no Church, when there is no *actual* Assembling together, and the *dismissing* the Congregation would be the *dissolving* and the destruction of the Church. Besides, the *General Assembly* or the *Holy Catholick Church*, which cannot thus actually meet together, would be *no Church* at all.

Yet, we must note, that the very *Nature* of the Church supposeth fellowship and *Communion of Saints*, and consequently, expects and requires it, as occasion offers, from all that profess themselves *Members* of it.

3. Lastly, This *Assembly*, as it is an habitual, so it is a *set and fixed* Society of Christians: not a stolen or snatcht or *occasional* meeting: but a *set and fix'd* Society, whereby it is rendered *visible* and known to the *world*. Hereby, it was known what *St. Paul* meant, when he wrote his *Epistles* to the Churches of *Rome*, *Corinth*, *Ephesus*, *Galatia*, &c. Because they were fix'd and constant, and open in the profession of Christianity, in the same *establish'd* Assembly.

It is the shame of our Churches, especially in *Cities*, that our *Congregations* are *certain* only in our *Parishes*, and our Churches *distinguish'd* only by our Houses and Cohabitation. Our *Congregations* being as *fluent* as *Rivers*, as unconstant as water; and as water, mingling

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ling and confounding themselves one with another, where indeed we have the *same place*, but seldome or never the *same company*. Many persons, when they go out of their *Houses*, they are scarce resolved to what *Church* they shall go, but are easily disposed to be carried by the *winde of Novelty* or *Party* to any other Congregation rather than *their own*.

Now if we reflect upon what hath been observed of the *Nature* of the Church, we may gather something of the *definition* of it. It is, as you heard, a *fix'd Society of persons called*. Supply the *terms* of this *Call*, *viz.* from *what*, and to *what* these persons are called, and the *Definition* of the Church of Christ may be this.

The Definition  
of the Church.

*The Church of Christ is a fix'd Society of persons called out of the world to the worship of the true God.*

Again, by *distinguishing* these terms, the *World* and the *Worship* of God: (the *World*, as the world of *Infidelity*, and the world of *Impiety*: The *Worship* of God, as *external*, by *Ordinances*, and *internal*, by *Graces*;) you have the *Church* in its usual distinction, as *visible* and *invisible*: For,

Distinction.

The *visible* Church is nothing else, but a company called out, or severed from the world of *Infidels* to worship God in his *external* Ordinances: and the Church *invisible*, is a company called out, or severed from the world of *wicked* and *impious* men to *worship God in spirit and truth*.

But, seeing those that worship God in *spirit and truth*, do also worship him with *external* worship; and those that *believe with the heart*, do also *confess* with the *mouth*, the Church *invisible* is found in the Church *visible*, as a *part* in the *whole*; and this *distinction* is justly *rejected*; at least concluded *imperfect* and *improper* by  
very

Rom, 10.

Imperfect.

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very judicious and learned Divines. However it cannot be found in this *Text*, where, doubtless, both the *Members* of it are held and signified by this *Assembly*, especially as *General*, and the *General Assembly*, which consideration of the Church now offers it self.

HAVING spoken somewhat of the *Nature* of the Church as Ca-  
Church as Ca-  
tholick.  
tholick. Church as it's an *Assembly*, we crave your patience to take some *measure* of the *quantity* of it from the word *GENERAL*. The Church is here called *πανεκκλησια* *Omnis Cetus*, the whole Company, or *General Assembly*, upon which I conceive, we may safely ground our belief of the *Catholick* or Universal Church.

Yea, in this *general* affection of the Church, do we not finde something *special*, something distinguishing this, from all other Assemblies: certainly, there is *no Assembly* so *general*, this is emphatically the general Assembly; being confined to no *time*, to no *place*, to no *sort* of *people*: taking in Gods people in *all ages*, spreading it self (by the *Gospel*) over all *Kindreds*, and *Tongues*, and *People*, and *Nations* upon earth; having its *Head*, and ten thousand times ten thousand of its *Members* in *Heaven*, and great multitudes under the *Earth* it self. For, though the *Souls* of the Saints are severed from their *Bodies* by *Death*, yet in spite of *Death* and *Hell* it self, both their *Souls* and their *Bodies* are for ever united to *Christ* and the *Church*; for they *dye in the Lord*, and *sleep in Jesus*.

'Tis true, the word *Catholique* (as the *Fathers* against the *Novatians* acknowledge was not used by the *Apostles*, nor applied to the *Church* till some time after them; and then, sometimes in one sense, and sometimes in another, as a very Learned Man of our own observes.

Pacelon on the  
Creed.

Yet



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Yet as in the case of *particular Churches* the *distinction* of *Parishes* was made long after ; yet the ground and reason of this distinction , and of *Parochial Churches* , or *particular Congregations* determined by *Cohabitation* , is most evident in the *Scripture* , where the several *Churches* bear the names of their several *Cities* . So, though the word *Catholick* was applied to the Church, some time after ; yet the *ground* of this application of it, is very apparent, as in several other places ; so particularly in the *Text* before us : for where the thing in truth is found, it may fairly claim *that name* , as it only signifies *that thing* . Now by *Catholick Church* , we mean only the *Universal Body* of Christ , containing all *particular Members* and *Churches* of Christ within it, and consisting of them : and this *Universal Body* we find in the *General Assembly* in the *Text* , where in we may therefore *believe the Catholick Church* .

3 of the  
Church.

**H**ERE we cannot but observe the *Unity* of the Church ; for if it be the *General Assembly* , it can be but one. There are indeed many *particular Christians* , and many *particular Assemblies* of Christians , commonly called *particular Churches* : but all these are knit and united together, (as many *Sheep* in one *Fold* , and many *Companies* in one *City* , and many *Cities* in one *Kingdom* ) in one common *aggregative Body* , this great *Universal Individuum* , the *Catholick Church* or *General Assembly* . There are many *Members* , but one *Body* .

Cor. 12. 20

Col. 2. 19.

*Holding the head* (saith the Apostle) *from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God* . Here is, first to be observed , the Church in its  
Head



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*Head and all the Body* : then the *union* of this Church, which is *double* ; betwixt the *Head* and *all the Body*, and betwixt the *members* of all the body among themselves : Again, here is a twofold *effect* of this double *union*, of the *union* betwixt the *Head* and the *Body*, the effect is, *Nourishment Ministred* : and of the *union* among the *members* and parts of this body, is, *increase*, or growth in *grace* : Here is, lastly, the *means* of all this, *viz. Foynts* and *Bands* ; by which the members are all *knit* into *one body*, and *nourished* and *increased*.

But, what are those happy *Foynts* and *Bands* ? 'tis The Bands of  
its unity. worth our enquiry, seeing the *unity* and consequently, the *prosperity* of the *whole body* depends upon them ; the *Apostle* hath notably described them, in that famous *Eulogy* of the *Primitive Christians* ; who, I think, were the *Church of the first-born*, and the *small thing* or infant of this *General-assembly* ; they (saith he) *Continued sted-* A. 2. 41.  
*fastly in the Apostles Doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and of prayers* ; so that, profession of the *same faith* and *Communion* in the *same Worship*, are these happy *Foynts* and *Bands*, by which *all Christians* stand united in *one body* : and this blessed *unity* is *maintained* onely by *continuing stedfastly* in them ; a continuing stedfastly in the *fellowship* of the *Apostolical Primitive Doctrine, Sacraments* and *Prayers*, continues the *being* and *unity* of the *one Holy Catholick and Apostolick Church*, to the end of the world.

The *Apostle S. Paul* is somewhat more *particular* : he seems to prove that we are *one body*, because we are *one Spirit* : and both these, because we have one *Lord*, Eph. 4.  
one *Faith*, one *hope*, one *Baptism*.

One *Lord*, we being all *Subjects* under one *Prince*,  
Law, and Government, we are thus *one Kingdom*, one  
C People,

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People, one Church: the sum of which *Law* we have in the *Decalogue* or ten *Commandments*; one *Faith*, i. e. professing the same *Scriptures*, *Articles*, and *Fundamentals*, the sum of which we have in the *Apostles Creed*; One *Hope* in the same *promises*, and of the same *happiness*; one *Baptism*, that is (by a figure, a part of worship put for the whole) we have but one and the same way of worshipping God: We are all Baptized into one body, all in every place call upon the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and though we are many particular Christians and Churches, yet we are all one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.

1 COR. 12. 13.  
1 COR. 1. 1.  
1 COR. 10. 16, 17.

But, because a person may secretly abjure the Kingdom of Christ, and Apostatize from his Lord and reject all hope in him, and yet the world nor the Church suspect it; Moreover, seeing we expressly own Christ to be our Lord, and our hope in him as our Saviour, by faith and Worship; our Union with Christ and the Church, is said to be held onely by two Bands: Faith and Worship.

Again, for as much as we have seldom occasion to profess our Faith, but in the means of the Publick Worship: especially, seeing the very Nature of the Church is an assembly; but chiefly, considering the Visible Church appears such only at least ordinarily, by her set, Constant and visible Assemblies; the Apostle reduceth the whole matter, to this one point, Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together.

HEB. 10. 25.

Yet, once more, because the word of the Gospel is to be preach'd to all nations: and men as such, though they be not Christians, or of the Church, are Naturally bound to the duty of prayer; and because some do hence conclude, though very absurdly, that Set and Constant Com-

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Communion in the word and prayer, is *no part* of the *Note* of the Church of God; It may not be thought unreasonable, to make the *participation*, a little stricter, and in our age at least, to lay most weight, upon the reception of the *Lords Supper*.

This is certainly the *special* band of *union and fellowship* betwixt us, and Christ, and the Church: the *other* Ordinances, the *Word and Prayer*, do even attend *this* Sacrament: *Breaking of Bread*, was the *Apostolical Fellowship* in the Primitive Church, *every Lords Day*: and as if *this* were the *Sum Total* of all *Worship*, all *Liturgies* seem to be compiled chiefly *in order* to it: this Ordinance, therefore is expressly known by the name of the *Communion*, and I could heartily wish, that many, that attend our *Prayers and Sermons*, do not hence conclude they are yet *none of us*, they have no Church-Fellowship or Communion with us, because *they refuse* to Communicate with us in the *Lords Supper*.

My matter is now fitted, I hope, for a very *serious application* to which I hasten, as my great *aim*.

I Doubt not, but you all remember, what joy and encouragement the *context* offer'd us, to *Come unto*, to Joyn with, and *continue* in the *Fellowship* of the Church of God; For we thus *come* to the *General assembly*; we have Communion with *our own* Church, and with *all in every place that Worship God*, and at all times too: with *Adam and Abel* with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*; with *Noah, Daniel and Job*; with all the *Patriarchs, Confessors and Fathers*: the glorious company of the *Apostles*, the goodly fellowship of the *Prophets*, the Noble Army of *Martyrs*, and the *holy Church throughout all the World*. Yea thus, you dwell in the *holy Hill, Mount Zion*,  
C 2 the

Application  
General.

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the *new* and heavenly *Jerusalem* ; where, even in *this* life you have fellowship with *Myriads of Angels*, who have the *charge* of you ; where you have fellowship with *Jesus Christ* as *Mediatour*, and all the virtues of the *blood of sprinkling* : and thereby also, in the *pardon* and *favour* and *presence* and *glory* of God himself the *Frudge* of all.

Who would not *coves*, who would not *stedfastly* continue in, and carefully *improve* such a *society*, where such are *priviledges* of every *member* and such *honour* have all it's *Saints*.

Let us then, hold fast the *profession* of our *faith* without *wavering* ; when the blessed *Apostle* preach't. this *Doctrine*, this was the use he made of it : Seeing we are all come to this *General Assembly*, let us never *depart* from it : never *forsake* the *Assembling* our *selves* together as the manner of some is. This, in the *Apostles* sense, is not only to let loose, but to let go the *profession* of our *faith* : ye have heard of the excellent *unity* of this *General Assembly*, tremble to think of *breaking* it : ye have heard of the glorious *advantages* of all that come to it, and have true and sincere fellowship with it, let us therefore fear least any of us should seem to fall short of them.

CAP. 4. T.

R. 16 17

The *Apostle* speaks *bitterly*, so some would express it : Mark those, saith he, that cause *divisions* and offences, and avoid them : he useth a *hard* ( some perphaps would think it a *railing* ) word Διχοσμία, it signifies dissention causing Schism or Separation, yea Sedition and Faction, whereby they greatly Scandalize, wound and divide the Church : therefore the *Apostle* chargeth the Church with some heat, that they should mark such and avoid them : that they should mark them, as men

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men do a *Rock* at Sea, that they may avoid *ruine* and *shipwrack*.

There are two *degrees* of *Schisme*: The first is a *renting* and dividing in the Church: 'Tis against this the *Apostles* indignation ariseth, as you have heard: this, therefore, doubtless, in his opinion, whatever *favour* we have for it, was a very *great* sin: but the *other* is a *renting* our selves, or others *from* the Church. And this is so *great* an evil, that 'tis both *sin* and *punishment*; 'tis its own *guilt*, *sentence*, and *execution*.

If we rent our selves from the Body, how do we hold the Head? If we depart from the Church where shall we finde salvation? and what is it to draw back, but to draw back unto perdition? Pardon my *plainness*, censure not my *charity*; for I only repeat the *Apostles Arguments*, which he once used upon the *same* exhortation: they are *these* and such like. To *for sake* the *assembling* of our selves together, is to *despise* the Gospel, is to *shame* and *crucify* Christ, is to *prophane* his *Blood*, and *rent* and *tear* his *Sacred Body*; and if those that *despised* *Moses Law*, died *without* *mercy*, of how much *sorer punishment* shall *these* be thought worthy? to *for sake* the *assembling* our selves together, is by the *Apostles* interpretation a *sinning* *willfully*: and if we sin *willfully*, by the *Apostles* Argument, there remains no *mere sacrifice* for sin: and what then remains (I fear to speak it) a *certain fearful looking for of Judgement* and fiery indignation that shall devour the *adversaries*; for how shall they *escape* that neglect (the means) of so *great salvation*?

If there be therefore any *Consolation* in *Christ* [to be expected in his Church and Ord nances, if any of *love* among Brethren] If any *fellowship* of the *Spirit*,

Extra Ecclesiam nulla Salus.

Heb. 6.

Heb. 10. 29.

to 30.

Heb. 2. 3.

Phil. 4. 1.

rit.

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rit, [in the Assemblies of Gods people], if any *homls of mercies* [towards your *own* and *others* souls, towards us, that *wait* for them, towards this *divided*, distressed, calamitous Church of England, and the General Assembly] Remember ye are *Subjects* of the same Kingdom, ye are *Children* of the same House, *Partners* in the same Fellowship, *Members* of the same Body, and that ye have all these *Relations* only, or chiefly, in order to *Communion*: let *this minde* then be in you, and rejoyce in the *gates of Sion*, co-habit in the *Courts* of Gods House, and with one *accord*, and one *minde*, preserve the *Unity* of the Church, and save your selves from this *unto-ward Generation*, dreading to make the least *breach* when a *Torrent* of *Popery* or *Irreligion* threatens daily to break in upon us.

So sad a *prospect* is in my eye, that were my words *Spirit* and *Life*, or had I the *Tongue of Men and Angels*; could I utter power and *effects*, or pronounce a *fat* like to *Gods*: I say, if our *divisions* continue or increase, so *black* a prospect is in my eye (that pretend not to see as far off) that I should imploy all my *strength* and Oratory here, to advise and perswade you all, to Worship the Lord Jesus Christ in the *Unity* and fellowship of his Church.

O'j.

**B**UT why so earnest? especially with us? we could not hear your *reproof*, did not our presence *confute* it? or *receive* this counsel, but by shewing we need it *not*: do not we attend the *Word* and *Prayer*? do we *forsake* the General Assembly?

Ans.

So far you have *run well*; yet you must be remembered (I am sorry you *must*) that the *Apostles* fellowship consisted not only in *Doctrine* and *Prayers*, but in

BREAK-

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**BREAKING OF BREAD.** 'Tis sad, that the *Communion* should be the great matter of our *Division*: but the *Text* and our *present* condition assure us, that by *BREAKING of Bread* we may be **ONE BODY** again: and now you may see my **MARK**.

*Application  
Special.*

*Three things*, especially, give life and vigor to an *Argument*; the *seasonableness* of it, the *necessity* of it, and the *capacity* or disposition of the persons to whom it is addressed: and do not all *these* conspire to *quicken* a most *earnest* application to you in this point of the *Sacrament*?

1. For the *Season*, such a discourse is never *mis-timed*, where the *Communion* is so frequently administered; besides, its *monthly* course is now at hand: but, alas, expecting a *slender* appearance, with sadness enough, unbecoming such a *feast*, as it is wont to do.

2. Therefore, the *necessity* of such an *Argument*, is too too evident; yet it is not without its *advantage*; for herein I need not shoot at *Rowers*, as in other matters: I have the *Mark* before me, and I am sure to hit it. I am to *reason* with *persons*, and to endeavour to *persuade those very persons*, to *practise* a duty of great moment, who have *sadly* and *long neglected* the same duty: I wish there be not *hundreds* of such in my eye.

3. Yet, of your *capacity* and well *disposedness* to receive satisfaction I cannot doubt: I know you are not of the *fierce* and giddy, but you are of the *moderate part* of the *City*, in *whom* there is but little or nothing wanting, to make you *intire*, and *la king nothing*, in the fellowship of the Church, excepting only this *one thing necessary*, the receiving the *Lords Supper*: You are *willing* already, and I trust, that with a little *persuasion* and  
medi-



## The General Assembly.

*meditation*, and *Gods blessing* upon them, you will be *obedient in all things*.

Thus, I have much *encouragement* to proceed, but alas, wherewithal shall I *perswade*?

1. ARE YOU NOT CHRISTIANS? are you not bound by the sacred Vow of your *Infancy*, that *Bond* of God upon your *Soul*? are you not bound to *obey* your *Lord*, and to renounce all carnal and spiritual *temptations* to the contrary? or is not the *command* of our Lord, again and again, *Do this*, do this in *remembrance* of me? hath he spoken any thing more *plainly*? or commanded any thing so *expressly*? shew it if you can; I mean, touching his *outward* worship.

What is the matter then? is there no *fear* of his *command*, who saith, *Do this*? no *love* to his *Person*, who saith, do *it* in *remembrance* of me? is there no *faith* left in his *Promises* and Presence annex'd to his *Worship* and Ordinance? is there no more *conscience* of duty? no more *comfort* in performing it, or *danger* in neglecting it? Consider, I beseech you, that the *Lord* of the *Feast* was as *truly* provoked (as appears in the *story*) by the *omission* and the slight *excuses* of those that were invited to his *Supper*, as by the *unpreparedness* of him that came without a *Wedding Garment*, and a whole *City*, for contriving to *despise* the gracious invitation and

Matth. 22. 7. *Feast* of the Gospel, was made as *Sodom*, and like unto *Gomorrhah*.

Certainly, the *Body* and *Blood* of Christ is the provision of the Gospel *Feast*; and this is, especially *serv'd* up, in that Ordinance which is called the *Communion* of his *Body and Blood*, and the *Lords Supper*.



2. **A**RE YOU NOT MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH of Christ, wherein you constantly hear his word and commands? yea, do you not, by your daily profession, do you not say, you will obey him? you know the Law as you are Christians. you acknowledge your Allegiance, and promise obedience by the profession of the Church, of which you are members: you know your Masters will, and say you will do it. but is it done? you say, Lord Lord, but despise his Communion: you cry the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, but refuse Fellowship with its Assemblys. Indeed it is not plain Rebellion, but here is Disobedience with the witness, and the horrid aggravation of Hypocrisy.

Besides, the very nature of the Church of which you are members, is, as you have heard, an Assembly, and a Society: Now the direct and immediate expression of a Society, is communion and fellowship: and you know, that Communion in this ordinance, is most signally and expressly the Communion of the Church: neither, lastly, can it be denied, that by Communion with the Church, especially in this ordinance, we have communion also with Christ himself in all the benefits of his Body and Blood.

Consequently, by not communicating with the Church in this ordinance, we do so far want communion with Christ; we do so far divide from the Church of Christ, and blot out the Mark, I mean, the most evident character of our own Church-Membership, allowing our selves too in that very sin, we so much pretend to abhor; (I must be plain and speak out) the sin of Schism.

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For what is *Schisme*, but a *breaking* the *fellowship* of the Church without *just Cause*? 'tis *total*, when men *renounce* it *wholly*: but, doubtless, 'tis so in a very *great part*, when we *deny* to communicate with it in that most *signal mean* of communion with it, the *Lords Supper*. Yea, let it be seriously and *sadly* considered, if you, as I fear too *many* do; I say, if you *refuse* our *Communion*, because you would not *joyn* with the Church, (whatever *otherwaies* you do *actually* joyn with us, yet) in your own *Intention*, you are not only guilty of a *Schisme*. with respect, to that *particular* Congregation, to which you belong, but (our fellowship with a *particular* Church, being the *mean* and Bond, by which we have Communion with the Church *Universal*) you thus also *separate* from the *Catholick* Church, and *General Assembly*.

**I** Astly, Let me *speak* unto you as unto *wise men*, and *Judge* ye what I *say*; and *what* is that which may *perswade* a PRUDENT man to *go ON*, but that he hath BEGUN well: and that there is no *OTHER WAY* for him: that, what is *behinde*, is regular to his *OWN PRINCIPLES* of Right and Justice: and that his proceeding may greatly *advantage* both *himself* and his *generation*.

If *all* these fail, I know not with what *Arguments* I should deal with you: but I cannot but hope *better things*, would you *wisely* consider, that it is your *own Case*, that is strengthened with all the *particulars* mentioned.

1. You have *begun well*: neither can it harbour in a sober thought, that you are not *already embodied* with us,

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us, or no Members of the *Church of England*: 'tis acknowledged but now, that your own *intentions* to separate from us, do make you *guilty* of *separation* in your *own minde*, and intention; but you may be guilty of *that sin*, both in *intention*, and *affection*, that you never yet *actually* committed: a *Mistake* in your selves, cannot make that *not* to be, which *really* is: neither doth your *abstaining* from this *one Ordinance*, nullifie your Communion with us, in the *rest*, or your *visible Church-Membership* with us. *Thoughts* cannot void the natural effect of *Actions*.

You were at first, *Baptized into one Body with us*, 1 COR. 12. 13.  
and 'tis far from you, to *renounce that Baptism*: by your means, your *children* also, are still presented to *God* and our *Church*, in the *same Ordinance*, and are *Baptized* as you were. You joyn with our *Prayers*, and constantly hear our *Sermons*, and attend upon our *Publick Assemblies*; and indeed, in a *great part* you *make* them up; only, you fail to *complete all*, by *receiving* the Sacrament of the *Lords Supper*. But do you abstain from *this*, lest you should joyn with a *wicked people*? how *thin* a cheat would you put upon your selves? for *Gods* sake, the *Churches* sake; yea for your own *Credit* and *Reputation*, *beguile* not *your selves* into so many *mischiefs*, upon so *weak* a shift, upon *no ground* at all: ye have done well, in all the *rest*, and you have the *same reason* to receive the *Sacrament*. Proceed, proceed like *wise men*, to *perfect* what you have so well *begun*, so far *ingaged* in. *Go on and prosper*: For,

2. There is *no other way* for you. *God* himself hath *hedged up* your way: he *commands* you to do

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2 Cor. 7. 1.

*this also*: he threatens, if you turn aside, or draw back: you have the encouragement of his many promises to perfect holiness through the fear of God, and the Saints in all ages, that have gone to heaven the same way, as a cloud of witnesses, (as in the Grecian Games) are round about you, and leave no other way open to you, but the race that is set before you.

Heb. 12. 1.

The law of man also, obligeth and tyes you hard to this duty, it hath made special provision in this case: it severely threatens your neglect and disobedience in this kinde. If you have not felt the force of this Law, do not think the Law is weak and feeble: do not misinterpret the favour, and patience, or long-suffering of your Rulers, to turn their grace into wantonness; both the Canon Law, and the Statute Law, the Laws of the Church, and of the Land, directly require you to receive this Sacrament, at least three times a year: and the penalty of them, if you do not (and cannot give good reason for such omission) I need not tell you, is very severe in this, as in some other special cases.

Perhaps, you hoped that these Laws would have been repealed, or have had their force abated; but in vain: if you are wise and prudent, you now know 'tis in vain to hope it. Perhaps, the fear of the Laws (you best know your own hearts) hath been so far sanctified to you as to work you to comply so far as you do; but you must know (I speak to wise men) that unless you take one step farther, and receive the Sacrament, your labour and design is so far lost; you are still in the same danger, and the severity of the Law is still against you; and without this one thing more, which is therefore, your safety, as well as your duty, no other way can pos-

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possibly be found, by the wit of man (as things now are) *to escape it.* Yea,

Indeed, *you* have *left* no *other* way for *your* selves: ye are *Come to the General Assembly*, ye are got many *stages* beyond *others*: *these* ye have *left* behind you; *these* ye have *lost*. Now, if you *proceed* not, and receive the Sacrament with us, you are *short of us*, and the *Law*; ye loose your *labour* and your *selves*.

What then *remains*, but that you *hasten* onward, to *us*, that are *before* you; who have *both* our *Arms* ready to receive and *imbrace* you: to *Jesus Christ* in *this* blessed Ordinance, who *invites*, and *prepares*, and *expects* you: and the *blood of sprinkling* which speaks *better* things.

3. **I**S not the matter to which I perswade you, Regular also to your *own principles*? and the *Doctrine you have received*? or is there indeed, any *Solid* reason, either from *without* or from *within* you, why you *should not* Communicate *with us*? your selves *being Judges*, all that can be *pre-tended* against it, is either, the *Corruption* of the *Worship* or the *Worshippers*: let me beseech you to *weigh* them *both*, in their *whole strength* with your own *reason*; *look upon* them in your own *light*, and I doubt not to pronounce, you will be *ashamed* of them *both*.

1. All that is excepted against, in the *Worship* or Administration, (as a *Bar* to your receiving) is, that *kneeling* is required: but for such a *shadow*, what *wise-man* would loose the *Substance*? you know, that the  
*gesture*

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*gesture* in it self is *lawful* and reverent, and what reason can be given, why we should not *obey Authority*; by worshipping God, after a *lawful* and *reverent* manner?

Yea, consider, have you not *learned*, that the *Second Commandment*, requires an observance of all the *moral* and *positive* worship of God; and doth as well *require*, that we should *bow down* and worship the *true God*, in his own ordinances, as *forbid* the worshipping and *bowing down to Idols*? Certainly, here is warrant to *bow down to God*, when we worship him: and if *kneeling* be *bowing down*, and *this* Sacrament be a part of *worship*, we have plain warrant to *Kneel at the Sacrament*.

Will you say that *kneeling* is a *fit posture* only when we *pray*? this may well be question'd; yet, let it be heeded, there is *prayer* used, when you *receive* the Sacrament: the *Minister* prays openly, that *the body and blood of Christ may preserve thy body and soul to everlasting life*, while he *gives* it; and certainly, every *worthy* receiver, *prays* for the *grace*, while he *receives* the *signs*.

However, what reason can spite it self-offer, why we may not lawfully and laudably *receive kneeling*; the *same* grace, we *ask* kneeling? and \* *give thanks*, as well as *beg* upon our *knees*; they *both* being parts of that one *ordinance*, viz. *Prayer*; where in, all acknowledge, it is *fittest*, if we may with *conveniency*, *kneel*.

But why do I *create scruples*? the *only one*, of the old *puritans*, and *Presbyterians*, in *this point*, was; least they *should*, or at least *should seem*, to *worship the Host*.

\* This Sacrament is the Eucharist.

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*Host.* You know, this was the *strength* of the *Objection* ? but is not this *totally* and perfectly removed now ? Can you imagine, that *any one* of the old *Puritans*, would *now* refuse to receive *kneeling* ? read their *books*, and *Judge Righteously*.

Indeed, there was *complaint*, that the *Declaration* of the *reason*, why *kneeling* is *required* in the *Sacrament*, was left out of the *former Liturgies* ; but it is *now inserted*, and that *complaint* is *answered*. We are assured, by the Churches *publick act* which is also taken into the *body of our Law*, and joyned to this *very office* of the *Sacrament*, that *such Idolatry*, as *kneeling* to the *elements*, is not in the least *intended*, but *abominated* and *abhor'd* ; and that in so *plain* and direct terms, as have left no place for *Scruple* or *Cavil*.

Now, ask your selves, is not *kneeling* a very humble and *fit gesture* for us, in *Gods presence*, especially when we *pray* to him ? do not we *pray*, even while we *receive* the *Sacrament* ? do not we expect to receive a  *blessing* from that Majesty, to whom we *pray*, *kneeling* ? is not the *Eucharist* a *Thanksgiving*, and *that*, a part of *Prayer*, which is *fitly* performed, *Kneeling* ? however, is it not a *lawful gesture*, and required of us by *lawful authority* ? and have not *those very Powers*, that *require kneeling*, taken away all fear of *Idolatry* and *Bread Worship's*, have we therefore any *shadow* left us ? or any *excuse* ? shall we *any longer* neglect so *great* a duty ? or dare we say, we *may* not, or we *fear* we may not *receive* it, *Kneeling*.

2. But the *Goliath* is at hand : the *only objection*, so far as I can learn, is now taken from the *Worshippers*, 'tis complain'd, *Discipline* is *Neglected*; the *Profane* and

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and *Scandalous* are admitted to the Sacrament : and thus the Church is *Corrupted*.

*Ans.* Were all *this* admitted, yet, we may therefore separate, is no good *Consequence* in your own *Logick* : but give me leave a little.

Was not the Church of the *Jews*, that Crucified their Lord as *Corrupt* as ours, especially in the *Rulers* of it ? Yet *Christ* himself held fellowship with *them*, and was a *Minister of the Circumcision*, he directs their *Hypocrisie*, and *cruelly*, yea their *leaven of false Doctrine* and *Superstitious vanities* ; but never persuades to *separate on* ( only from their *sins*, not ) from the *Worship* of God among them. The Church of *Corinth*, though exceedingly *Corrupt*, partly in *Doctrine* ; many ( at least ) questioning the *Resurrection* : partly in *discipline* ; not casting out that *wicked person* ; but chiefly, in *Manners*, *Divisions* and *Disorders* in Gods worship, these things the Apostle *observed* ; particularly wrote against. Yea the point of *separation* came in his way ( 2 Cor. 6. ult. ) and he calls upon them to *come out from Idolaters* and *separate from them* ; but not a word of *separation* from so *wicked a Church* ; he sharply *reproves* their *profaneness*, *severely exhorts every one* to his *duty* ; but gives leave to *none* to *separate*.

Indeed, he chargeth them *not to Company* with the *scandalous*, and with *such a one no not to eat* ; and perhaps *this eating*, may be stretched to signify eating at the *Sacrament* : but on *whom* doth he lay *this charge* : and *how* is it to be observed ? he doth not call to a few of the *best* and *purest*, and advise them to forsake so *wicked an assembly* ; but he *speaks* to the *whole Church*, and directs them, *how to avoid* that



that wicked company : by casting them out of the Church, and delivering them to Satan. If any, that is called a brother be a fornicator, &c. with such a one no not to eat; ye judge those that are within : Therefore put away *ult. v.* from you that wicked person. 'Tis not, therefore separate from the Congregation no moral wickedness, can justify this. This were to throw away all means of reformation, and by our divisions, to let all run to ruine and destruction : but therefore, put away from among you ; every one doing his part, in his place, for the purging the Church of corruption, and casting out of the Scandalous, if they will not reform.

You know, this is the only course allowed by God ; all other wayes of reforming are tricks of our own devising ; and hitherto, the success hath been answerable : the foolishness of God is wiser than men.

But seeing we are so near it, let me be plain with you ; and put it home upon your Conscience : if our Church be so very corrupt, and discipline be not executed, pray where lies the fault ? do not you know, that you must first tell your brother of his fault (if not a public scandal) This you do not. However, you know the Officers must proceed, *Secundum allegata & probata*, upon complaint and evidence ; you, if you know such persons in the Congregation, you must tell the Church. This you do not. Judge your selves ; censure not others, the sin lies at your own door, not altogether at the Churches, or your Ministers. Do but your duty faithfully, and who knows but the Church may be reformed ? however, that it is not, is first, your fault, and till you have done your duty, you have least cause to complain. Certainly, endeavours of reformation

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in your place, is *your* duty; but *separation a complicated sin*.

*Thus*, you have found a way to forsake your *duty* in the Communion of the Church, and to have fellowship with it, *only* in its *sin*. You your selves *connive* at wickedness, and then charge your *Minister* and the *Church* with your own crime, and give occasion to your selves to *take offence* and be gone. Is this *fair* or equal dealing? is the *complaint* reasonable? or the ground of separation sound and solid? yea, you know the contrary, and I would believe you are *ashamed* of it. You know, though *they* do not their duty, you must not omit *yours*: you know ('tis your own *rule* and light) that if you are *prepar'd* your selves, you do not communicate with the wickedness of *unworthy* receivers: you know, if you have done *your part*, the *Governors* must answer for corruption in *discipline*: You know, that corruption in *manners* cannot *justify* a *separation*, or a refusal to joyn with the Church in *any* Ordinance of God. You know, that such refusal or separation is *sinful*, is *schismatical*: this *you know*, all this is according to your own *principle*.

Give me leave to *reduce* the Argument, and I have done with it. *Schisme* is a *forsaking* of the Communion of the Church, without *just* ground. This you acknowledge.

To refuse to *receive the Sacrament*, because of the *wickedness* of the Members of the Church, is to *forsake* the Communion of the Church without *just ground*. This also you acknowledge 'Tis indeed, no just ground in the *Scripture* or the Judgment of the *Church* in any age before us: or in the opinion of the old

*Non-*

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*Non-conformists*, or the late *Presbyterians*, for which I appeal to all their own *Books*, and leave you to remember the *many years Sermons* heretofore out of this very *place*, to confirm it.

Now what remains? but, if you continue to refuse to receive the Communion with us upon *this ground*, because our Church is *Corrupt*, according to the *Scripture*, *Antiquity*, the Judgment of your *Brethren*, and your own *principles*, you thus continue in *sin*, and in the *sin* of *Schisme*, which God forbid.

Remember therefore how you have received, and heard, Revel. 3. and holdfast; and repent of your folly and easiness to contradict your *principles* with your *practice*; not considering you did so: be not still beguiled to so strong a course of *keeping* with a party, by *leaving* and going from its *Doctrine*, or of keeping your *Conscience*, by violating its *Laws*. To conclude, *Mark those which cause these Divisions, Schisms, and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine you have received, and avoid them as Fire-Brands*; and scorn their Temptation, especially if any would persuade you to neglect a duty upon *such Arguments*, as you have cause to believe, they do not believe *themselves*; because *they have taught* you the contrary, and never taught you otherwise.

Though, truly, would you be persuaded to *communicate* with us, you would be easily convinced, that there is *too little* ground of your scruple: for generally, those that are *really profane*, save us the labour, being *profane in this* also, that they despise or neglect the *Sacrament*, and so far *excommunicate* themselves. However.

I must not forget to *caution* some of you, who,

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happily,

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*haply*, think to *evade* all, by saying you do *not despise* the Ordinance, or *neglect* it ; for though you do not receive with us , in *Publique*, yet you do receive in *private* ; for consult your own principles and this will not serve *your* turn ; nor to be plain, excuse you from *Schism*.

If you count it nothing to *dishearten* your *Minister*, and to break the *Laws* both of Church and State ; yet ask your *own hearts* why you *refuse* to Communicate Publickly ? Whether it be not, to *avoid* Communion with a wicked *generation* ? Ask again if so , whether this be not a *Schismatical separation* , unjustifiable by your *own principles*, as hath been said.

Indeed, the *not having* Actual fellowship with *every* particular Congregation, ( which is *morally* impossible ) is not *Schism* ; but doubtless to *Refuse* Communion with *any* particular Church, on *such* a ground, is *Schism* in it *self* and *your own* Doctrine. Let me, once again, *reason* with you : will you yet, rather, then *break bread* with it, will you rend and *break* the *Church* in *pieces* ? rather, then have *Communion* with the body of Christ will ye *divide* and tear it ? When your *mind* is satisfied, if you *hearken* to it, that it is *sin* in you ; and *so* great a sin to do so, as the pleasing of your *selves* or *others*, can never *Compensate*.

Moreover, I hope you will not *mistake* me, if out of my *tender affection* to you, I desire you seriously, to *weigh* with your selves , what *comfort* will *suffering* afford you, if the *cause* be *sin* and *Schism*, and *your own* *Hearts* conspire with the *Laws* to Judge and *condemn* you ; or, to use the *Apostles* Words , if the sentence of *rejection* should pass against you , as *such*, as being *subverted* and *sinning*, are you not *self-judged* and *self-*  
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condemned? or what have you to answer for *your selves* Tit. 3. 10. that you should not answer the *Laws*? I provoke not the *Law*, I would fain *provoke* you to your *duty*.

**L** Astly, would you be perswaded to *Comply* with this *duty*, how *greatly* would you *Advantage*, both *your selves* and *your Generation*? and is not *this* considerable with *prudent* persons? Certainly it is.

I need not present you with *Arguments* of your own *interest* and advantage; they are always with you: your *peace*, your *grace*, your *Spiritual* and *Temporal* comfort, very much *depend* on *this* Ordinance and your *worthy receiving* of it: shall I adde, your *Estates*, the good of your *families*, yea the *interest* of *that* which you call your *party*, are herein concerned. Consider the *Laws*, and the *extent* of them.

What is the *plea* of your *Adversaries*, but that, your *general refusing*, throughout the land; to *Communicate with us*, looks like a *Conspiracy*, and a dangerous *sign* of your *reserving* a *body* to confront (if *occasion* invites) both the *King* and the *Church*? and how can this be so well answered, as by your thorough *embodying* with us, and *sealing* the *unity*, openly, in the *Lords Supper*.

What is the *Hope* of our *Common Enemies*, but our *sad divisions* among our selves, and which way can we *frustrate* them, but by our *Communion*?

What is the ground of all our *fears*? the means of continuing our *distractions* at *home*? the *Confidence* of Neighbour *Nations*, that have *War* with us, but this *one thing*, our *differences* and *jealousies* among our selves, kept up by our *distance* in the *Worship* of God?  
you

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you are *very near* us: take but this *step farther*: And evidence your *Friendship*, by your *fellowsh p* with us, in the Supper of the Lord; and all these *Black Clouds* are gone.

What else remains (in outward appearance) to make us *quiet* and *happy*; to establish a *Flourishing* Church and State, an Object of *Envy*, but above the *Malice*, of all the *Nations* round about us?

I speak unto *Wise men*, Judge ye what I say, and the Lord give you *understanding* in all things.

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# FINIS.

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